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THE
MASQUE OF POETS
COLLECTED BY
EDWARD
J.
O'BRIEN







THE MASQUE OF POETS

THE MASQUE OF POETS

*A Collection of New Poems by
Contemporary American Poets*

EDITED BY
EDWARD J. O'BRIEN



NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

1918

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TO
J.-F. RAICHE

WGR 19 FEB '36

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INTRODUCTION

When "The Masque of Poets" was first conceived, it seemed to me that it might fulfil a purpose in American literature by serving to define the quality of the best contemporary poetry as poetry, rather than as the literary production of writers whose work was sought by the public because of the personalities which produced it. This series of poems has been gathered in order to restore in some measure to our day that Elizabethan spirit of comradeship and friendly rivalry which produced poetry because it had to sing rather than because it sought the applause of its personal admirers.

Many of us are inclined to believe falsely that poetry, and the spirit which produces it, is a more sophisticated art than it was in the days of the Eliza-

bethans. But I think that America today reflects very much the same spirit of adventurous seeking that England knew more than three centuries ago, and that this spirit will not find its happiest fulfilment till it becomes less personal in its consciousness of a public, and more disinterested in its practice as an art.

That the American poets who have contributed to "The Masque of Poets" are disinterested, is proven by their desire to remain anonymous when these poems were first published. Elizabethan poets sang out of pure joy and good fellowship, and the finest American achievement of the last decade has been born of similar joy and good fellowship. I should like to see American poetry published anonymously in such anthologies as this and left for judgment to the public irrespective of authors' signatures. That the authors of these poems now disclose their parenthood is in order that the public may satisfy itself that good work can receive acknowledgment and interested recognition for its own sake, as these poems have been welcomed

during their serial appearance in "The Bookman."

In "The Masque of Poets" many schools and many ideals now meet for the first time on common ground, and diverse points of view only serve to reveal the essential unity of inspiration behind what we are all trying to do. Much discussion has raged during the past three years or more as to whether what America is producing is new poetry or old poetry. The best solution that I can find is that it is just poetry. Magic, passion, and truth are what poets have always sought, and what all poets who are now sincere are still seeking. Interests change, as fashions change, but the stuff of poetry is always the same, and the circle which begins with the Greek anthology is completed in Imagism, as the circle which begins with Crabbe and Ebenezer Jones is completed in the social poetry of America to-day. What is new in American poetry is fresh experience of life, and I find this as richly expressed in the traditional poetry of Anna

Hempstead Branch as in the supposedly radical poetry of Amy Lowell. These statements should be platitudes, but they are so universally denied nowadays, that I suppose I should claim them as canons of "the new criticism." Be this as it may, the reader of this anthology will find herein whatever is most authentic and genuinely felt in contemporary American poetry.

I do not claim completeness for this series of poems, but I do claim that it is representative. I regret the absence of several contributors whose contributions to the spiritual life of our day have been notable, but the war has had a numbing effect on many minds, and in other cases poets have recently published volumes containing every manuscript that they cared to print.

Five years from now it would be interesting to repeat this experiment, and I think the results would prove that very little change had taken place in the substance of our poetry, though the manner of its

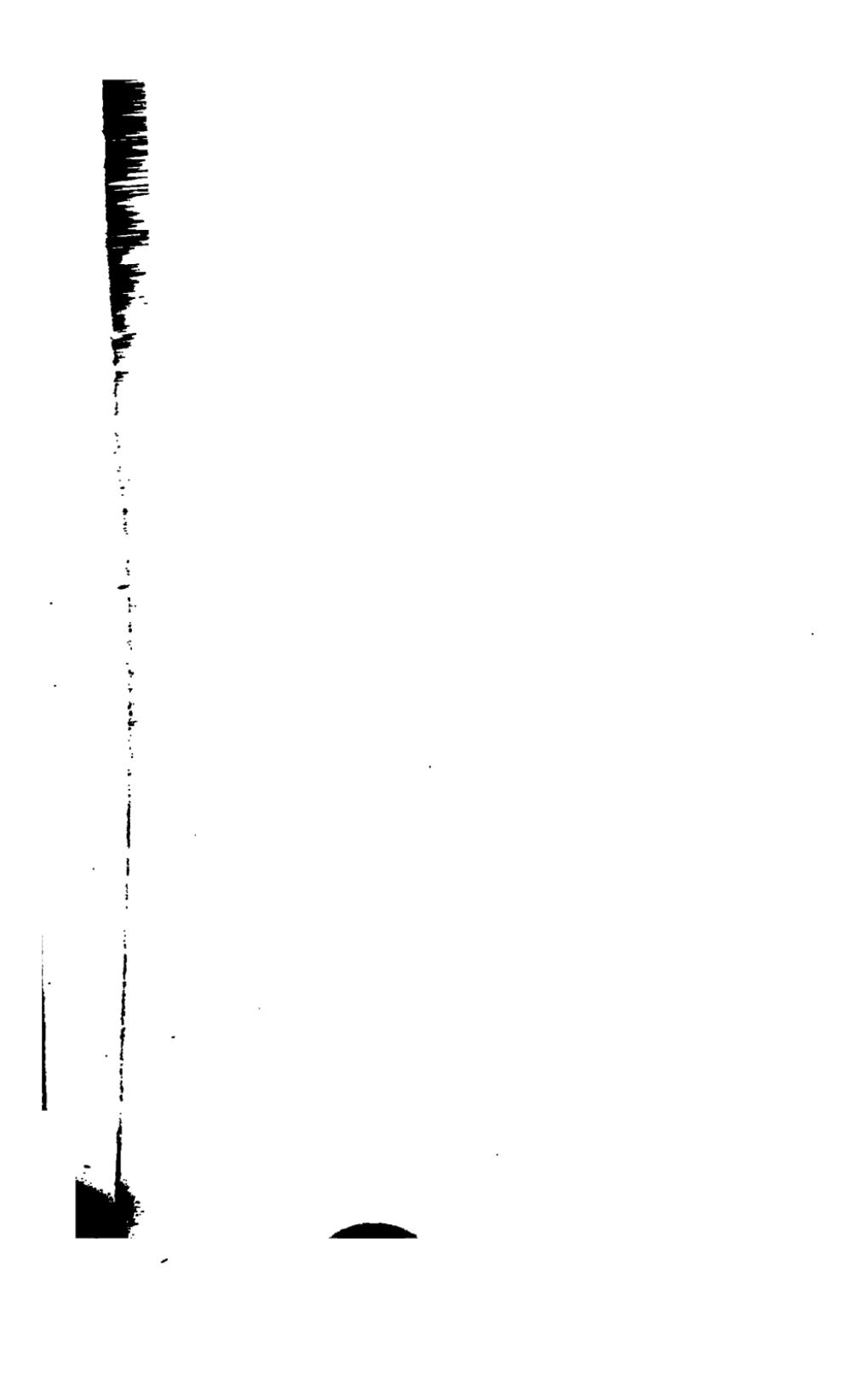
INTRODUCTION

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weaving might be different. As this series now stands, I commend it to the public who are adventurers all in life as our poets are adventurers in art.

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN.

South Yarmouth, Mass.,
New Year's Day, 1918.



THE MASQUE OF POETS

NOCTURNE OF REMEMBERED SPRING

CONRAD AIKEN

I

Moonlight silvers the shaken tops of trees,
Moonlight whitens the lilac-shadowed wall;
And through the soft-starred evening fall
Clearly as if through enchanted seas
Footsteps passing an infinite distance away,
In another world, and another day.

Moonlight turns the purple lilacs to blue,
Moonlight leaves the fountain hoar and old,
Moonlight whitens the sleepy dew,
And the boughs of elms grow green and cold. . . .

Our footsteps echo on gleaming stones;
The leaves are stirred to a jargon of muted tones. . . .
This is the night we have kept, you say;
This is the moonlight night that never will die. . . .

Let us return there, let us return, you and I,—
Through the grey streets our memories retain
Let us go back again.

CONRAD AIKEN

II

Mist goes up from the river to dim the stars,
The river is black and cold; so let us dance
To a tremor of violins and troubled guitars,
And flare of horns, and clang of cymbals, and drums;
And strew the glimmering floor with petals of roses
And remember, while rich music yawns and closes,
With a luxury of pain, how silence comes. . . .
Yes, we have loved each other, long ago;
We moved like wind to a music's ebb and flow
At a phrase from the violins you closed your eyes,
And smiled, and let me lead you . . . how young we
were!
Waves of music beneath us dizzied to rise.
Your hair, upon that music, seemed to stir. . . .
Let us return there, let us return, you and I.
Through changeless streets our memories retain
Let us go back again.

NOCTURNE OF REMEMBERED SPRING

III

Mist goes up from the rain-steeped earth, and clings
Ghostly with lamplight among drenched maple trees,
We walk in silence, and see how the lamplight flings
Fans of shadow upon it . . . the music's mournful
pleas

Die out behind us, the door is closed at last,
A net of silver silence is softly cast
Over our dreams . . . slowly and softly we walk,
Quietly, with delicious pause, we talk,
Of foolish trivial things, of life and death,
Time and forgetfulness, and dust and truth,—
Lilacs and youth.

You laugh, I hear the after-taken breath,
You darken your eyes and turn away your head
At something I have said —
Some tremulous intuition that flew too deep,
And struck a plangent chord . . . to-night, to-night,
You will remember it as you fall asleep,

CONRAD AIKEN

Your dream will suddenly blossom with sharp de-light. . . .

Good-night! you say. . . .

The leaves of the lilac softly dip and sway,

The purple spikes of bloom

Nod their sweetness upon us, and lift again,

Your white face turns away,—I am caught with
 pain,—

And silence descends . . . and the dripping of dew
 from the eaves

And jewelled points of leaves.

IV

I walk in a pleasure of sorrow along the street

And try to remember you . . . the slow drops patter,

The mist upor the lilacs has made them sweet,

I brush them with my sleeve, the cool drops scatter,

And suddenly I laugh . . . and stand and listen

As if another had laughed . . . a fragrant gust

Rustles the laden leaves, the wet spikes glisten,

NOCTURNE OF REMEMBERED SPRING

A shower of drops goes down on stones and dust.
And it seems as though it were you who had shaken
the bough,
And spilled the fragrance — I pursue your face again,
It grows more vague and lovely, it eludes me now.
I remember that you are gone, and drown in pain.
Something there was I said to you, I recall,
Something, just as the music seemed to fall,
That made you laugh, and burns me still with
pleasure. . . .
What were the words — the words like dripping
fire? . . .
I remember them now, and smile, and in sweet leisure
Rehearse the scene, more exquisite than before,
And you more beautiful, and I more wise. . . .
Lilacs, and spring, and night, and your clear eyes,
And you, in white, by the darkness of a door. . . .
These things, like voices weaving to richest music,
Flow and fall in the cool night of my mind,

CONRAD AIKEN

I pursue your ghost among green leaves that are
ghostly,

I pursue you, but cannot find. . . .

And suddenly, with a pang that is sweetest of all,

I become aware that I cannot remember you;

The beautiful ghost I knew

Has silently plunged in the shadows, shadows that
stream and fall.

v

Let us go in and dance once more

On the dream's glimmering floor,

Beneath the balcony festooned with roses.

Let us go in and dance once more. . . .

The door behind us closes

Against an evening purple with stars and mist. . . .

Let us go in and keep our tryst

With music and white roses, and spin around

In lazy swirls of sound.

Do you foresee me, married and grown old? . . .

NOCTURNE OF REMEMBERED SPRING

And you, who smile about you at this room
Dizzy with whirling dancers — is it foretold
That you must step from tumult into a gloom,
Forget me, love another, grow white and cold?
No, you are Cleopatra, fiercely young,
Laughing upon the topmost stair of night;
Roses upon the desert must be flung,
It is your wish. . . . Above us, light by light,
Weaves the delirious darkness, petals fall,
They fall upon your jewelled hands, they tremble upon
your hair,—
And music breaks in waves on the pillared wall,
And you are Cleopatra, and do not care. . . .
And so, in memory, you will always be—
Young, and foolish, a thing of dream and mist;
And so, perhaps, when all is disillusioned,
And eternal spring returns once more,
Bringing a ghost of lovelier springs remembered,
You will remember me.

CONRAD AIKEN

VI

Yet when we meet we seem in silence to say,
Pretending serene forgetfulness of our youth,
“Do you remember . . . but then, why, should you
remember! . . .

Do you remember a certain day,
Or evening, rather,— spring evening long ago,—
We talked of death, and love, and time, and truth. . . .
And said such wise things, things that amused us
so . . . ?

How foolish we were, who thought ourselves so
wise! ”

And then we laugh, with shadows in our eyes.

A PILGRIMAGE

NANCY BARR MAVITY

I put off my smoke-dimmed garment,

I put on white for grey;

For I would go on pilgrimage

At the opening of the day;

To a nameless saint, whose altar

Is hidden I know not where,

To be healed of the heavy sickness

My soul like a cloak must wear.

The dull brown road before me

Like a fluttering pennon ran;

And the tingling dust in my nostrils

Smelled sweeter than roses can.

The wayside shrines were many —

But which was the one I sought?

One was of ancient branches

With murmuring leaves inwrought;

NAN CLARK BARR

One a sun-dazzled wheat field
Where the wind made a shadow road
That rippled and wavered and beckoned,
And in streams unchannelled flowed.

One lay where the moonlight-colour
Of oats, green-silvered, shone;
And one where the purpling clover
Close to my feet had grown.

But the brown road fled before me,
And would not let me stay
To kneel at the shrines of the wayside,
To lift up my heart and pray.

So who was the saint, I know not,
Who quiet healing wrought;
For the road that had turned like a fancy,
Lay straight as an iron thought:

A PILGRIMAGE

Led back to my house of labour,
To my garment of smoke-dimmed grey,
And home from my pilgrimaging
At the closing of the day.

But lo! It was girdled with sunshine
(O where was the miracle shrine?)
And my garment shone as the rainbow,
And my heart sang aloud, for a sign!

THERE LIVED A LADY IN MILAN

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

There lived a lady in Milan
Wrought for a madness unto Man,
A fawn Il Moro could not tame;
Her beauty unbedecked with pearls
More than all Beatrice's girls,
Her eyes a secret subtle flame.

Brocade wherein her body dressed
Was hallowed; flowers her footstep pressed
Suspired incense ere they died.
Her father mazed with alchemy
Wrought in his cellar ceaselessly.
She lived in quiet, gentle pride.

And by her garden in his hour
Passed Leonardo, come with power
From Florence. So he saw her face
Bending above the shrivelled stalks

THERE LIVED A LADY IN MILAN

Of autumn on the garden walks.

And Leonardo drank her grace.

She was as if a sunset were

With fresher colours, clearer air,

And a more golden coil of cloud.

She was as if all citherns swooned

With one rich harmony myriad-tuned,

Haunting, enchanting, pure and proud.

And Leonardo said, “Ladye,

I know not what you do to me

Who have and have not, seek nor find.

The sea-shell and the falcon’s feather,

Greece and the rock and shifting weather

Have taught me many things of mind.

“ My heart has taught me many things,

And so have emperors, popes, and kings,

And so have leaves and green May-flies;

Yea, I have learned from bird and beast,

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

From slouching dwarf and ranting priest.

Yet, in the end, how am I wise?

“ Though with dividers and a quill
I weave some miracle of will,—
Say, that men fly,— though I design
For peace or war a thousand things
Gaining applause from dukes and kings,—
Though soft and deft my colours shine,

“ Though my quick wit breed thunderbolts
I may not loose on all these dolts,
Things they are babes to comprehend,—
Though from the crevice in stone or lime
I trace grave outlines mocking Time,—
I know when I am beaten, Friend!

“ Say that there lived of old a saint
Even Leonardo dared not paint,
Even Leonardo dared not draw,—

THERE LIVED A LADY IN MILAN

Too perfect in her breathing prime
For colours to transmit to time
Or quill attempt,—aye, ev'n in awe!

“ Say this, cold histories, and say
I looked not on her from this day
Lest frenzied I destroy my art.
O golden lily,— how she stands
Listening! Beauty,— ah, your hands,
Your little hands tear out my heart!

“ Do you not know you are so fair,
Brighter than springtime in the air?
What says your mirror to your mind?”
“ Phantom,” she whispered, “ Do you plead
With ghostly gestures? . . . Ah, indeed,
Pity a lady deaf and blind

“ Since birth! ” . . . Then Leonardo turned
Saluting, though the sunset burned

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

In nimbus round her,— went his way
In daze, repeating “ God’s defect,
Even he! — and masterpiece elect! ”
He never saw her from that day.

EAST SIDE MOVING PICTURE THEATRE—
SUNDAY

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

An old woman rubs her eyes
As though she were stroking children back to life.
A slender Jewish boy whose forehead
Is tall, and like a wind-marked wall,
Restlessly waits while leaping prayers
Clash their light-cymbals within his eyes.
And a little hunchbacked girl
Straightens her back with a slow-pulling smile.
(I am afraid to look at her again.)

Then the blurred, tawdry pictures rush across the
scene,
And I hear a swishing intake of breath,
As though some band of shy rigid spirits
Were standing before their last heaven.

FACTORY-GIRL

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Why are your eyes like dry brown flower-pods,
Still, gripped by the memory of lost petals?
I feel that, if I touched them,
They would crumble to falling brown dust,
And you would stand with blindness revealed.
Yet you would not shrink, for your life
Has been long since memorized,
And eyes would only melt out against its high walls.
Besides, in the making of boxes
Sprinkled with crude forget-me-nots,
One is curiously blessed if one's eyes are dead.

A CHRONICLE

WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

All about the blown wind's ways,

Never unbelieving,

With a mellow, antique grace,

And triumphant grieving,—

Came across the meadow,

Went beyond the hill,

Thin as any shadow,

Passed my chronicle.

Earth writes the epitaph,

Rain and leaves wear it: —

Eyes to see, lips to laugh,

Are my shadows near it.

THE WET WOODS

WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

This path leads to the laurel,
And that, winds to the burn:
Hemlocks, pines, and birches,
Know the one that I turn.

It is wet in the woods to-day,—
And perhaps, the sun to-morrow,
Shall weave its gold, while away
I will be alone with sorrow.

TWENTY STARS TO MATCH HIS FACE

WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

Twenty stars to match his face,
All the winds to blow his breath.

In the dark no eye can trace
Life or death.

The word came, and out he went,
Heard the unseen flutterings
Of wings that showed the dream he sent,
The song he sings.

Twenty stars to match his face,
The sea-foam, his permanence —
There is no wind can mark his place
Here, or hence.

THE NAME

ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

When I come back from secret dreams
In gardens deep and fair,
How very curious it seems—
This mortal name I bear.

For by this name I make their bread
And trim the household light
And sun the linen for the bed
And close the door at night.

I wonder who myself may be,
And whence it was I came—
Before the Church had laid on me
This frail and earthly name.

My sponsors spoke unto the Lord
And three things promised they,
Upon my soul with one accord
Their easy vows did lay.

THE NAME

My ancient spirit heard them not.

I think it was not there.

But in a place they had forgot

It drank a starrier air.

Yes, in a silent place and deep —

There did it dance and run,

And sometimes it lay down to sleep

Or sprang into the sun.

The Priest saw not my aureole shine!

My sweet wings saw not he!

He graved me with a solemn sign

And laid a name on me.

Now by this name I stitch and mend,

The daughter of my home,

By this name do I save and spend

And when they call, I come.

ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

But oh, that Name, that other Name,

More secret and more mine!

It burns as does the angelic flame

Before the midmost shrine.

Before my soul to earth was brought

Into God's heart it came,

He wrote a meaning in my thought

And gave to me a Name.

By this Name do I ride the air

And dance from star to star,

And I behold all things are fair,

For I see them as they are.

I plunge into the deepest seas,

In flames I, laughing, burn.

In roseate clouds I take my ease

Nor to the earth return.

It is my beauteous Name — my own —

That I have never heard.

THE NAME

God keeps it for Himself alone,
That strange and lovely word.

God keeps it for Himself — but yet
You are His voice, and so
In your heart He is calling me,
And unto you I go.

Love, by this Name I sing, and breathe
A fresh, mysterious air.
By this I innocently wreath
New garlands for my hair.

By this Name I am born anew
More beautiful, more bright.
More roseate than angelic dew,
Apparelléd in delight.

I'll sing and stitch and make the bread
In the wonder of my Name,

ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

And sun the linen for the bed

And tend the fireside flame.

By this Name do I answer yes —

Word beautiful and true.

By this I'll sew the bridal dress

I shall put on for you.

THE PLUME

ABBIE FARWELL BROWN

“Here is a gift!” the Brownie said,
As something fell on the little maid’s head;
“A golden feather with silver bars
Of the Faraway Bird who sings to the stars!
A beautiful plume to use as you will,
Fortunate Friend on-top-of-the-Hill!
Fasten it into your curly hair,—
Love will follow and find you fair.
Put it into the Magi’s hands,—
They will pay you with gold and lands.
Feather a shaft with the magic thing,
And bring down Fame with a crippled wing.
Other wonders the plume can do,
But I wouldn’t bother, if I were you!”
Now the queer little maid on-top-of-the-Hill
Clipped the plume to a scratchy quill,—
The golden feather with silver bars
Of the Faraway Bird who sings to the stars!

ABBIE FARWELL BROWN

Then she wrote and wrote, all night, all day,
The curious things it made her say,—
Wonder-tales and whimsical rimes,
Faraway deeds of Faraway times;
Told for the clamouring boys and girls,
With bangs and braids, with clips and curls.
The children laughed and clapped and cried,—
“Tell it again! Tell more beside! ”
The queer little maid was proud and glad;
And this was the good of the gift she had,—
The magical plume of the Faraway Bird.

But the Brownie sighed; for never a word
To the busy house on the hill-top came,
Of flattering love, or wealth, or fame.

CALYPSO

AMELIA JOSEPHINE BURR

Wanderer, we must part — so the gods decree.

You must go again to Ithaca.

The cold green waves will wash you of the memory
of me,

Breaking on the coast of Ithaca.

Built we a house of dreams, beautiful in seeming,
But for those the Thunderer wakes there is no more
dreaming.

Go now, spread your sail, turn your prow to sea —
Yonder lies your way to Ithaca.

Theirs is to obey whom the gods command —
Holy is the hearth in Ithaca.

Home and harvest are waiting for your hand —
Fruitful are the fields of Ithaca.

Love the life you chose while it still is yours for living
Lest the jealous gods recall the treasures of their giving.
Passes our dream like our footprints in the sand —
Granite are the cliffs of Ithaca.

AMELIA JOSEPHINE BURR

I have sent him back at the gods' decree —

I have sent him back to Ithaca.

Never will I walk again beside the twilight sea

On the shore that looks toward Ithaca

Lest the wind should bring to him a breath of days

gone by,

Of the beauty and the sorrow of his madness, that

was I —

Peace to him and his, O Zeus! I ask no more of thee.

Peace upon that home in Ithaca!

I COME AND GO

WITTER BYNNER

I come and go
And never stay.
I pick and choose
A night, a day,
I find, I lose,
I laugh along,
I will not know
Right things from wrong.

I pity those
Who pity me,
I ask no boon,
But being free . . .
And so the moon,
My polished stone,
Shines and shows
I lie alone.

MOMENT MUSICALE

BLISS CARMAN

The round moon hangs above the rim
Of silent and blue shadowed trees,
And all the earth is vague and dim
In its blue veil of mysteries.

On such a night one must believe
The Golden Age returns again
With lyric beauty, to retrieve
The world from dreariness and pain.

And down the wooded aisles, behold
What dancers through the dusk appear!
Piping their rapture as of old,
They bring immortal freedom near.

A moment on the brink of night
They tread their transport in the dew,
And to the rhythm of their delight,
Behold, all things are made anew!

ALEXANDRA

SARAH N. CLECHORN

Breasting white whirlwinds
On the drift-bound mountains,
Challenging the sleet-edged
March wind's mirth:
Far in summer woodlands
Whelmed in the storm and thunder
(Fearless filial daughter
Of the kind brown earth),
O the bonny, strong, courageous health of Alexandra!
Deep thoughts, wide thoughts
Fill her tranquil musing,
Make her clear cheek colour
And her still breast rise:
These with steadfast labour,
Skilled and single-hearted,
Safe she founds on homely soil,
And rears them to the skies!
O the sword-bright, reason-proving mind of Alexandra!

SARAH N. CLEGHORN

Robust and tender
Is her home-grown feeling;
Swift her espousal,
Of the kindmost's part;
Instinct her free faith
And her loyal valour;
Native to her west-born,
Fellow-caring heart,
Wide as heaven and warm as home, the heart of Alexandra!

Far forward-looking
Is her candid spirit,
Is her gallant, gracious,
Calm and open soul.
Like an ox for service,
Like a bird for freedom,
Moves her lucid purpose,
Single toward its goal,
Such the spirit high and fine that burns in Alexandra!

ALEXANDRA

Sayest thou, this picture
Paints no earthly woman?
Nay, but in our Valley
Is her dwelling-place.
Nay, for yester-even
Did I walk beside her,
Listened to her low voice,
Looked upon her face,
Ay, my comrade long and well-beloved, Alexandra!

CLOUDS

LINCOLN COLCORD

The clouds rise over the high mountains,
They rise over the rim of the sea . . .
While I was looking away, the first one rose.
Swift, swift, swift,
Still like birds, silent like thoughts, inexorable like
time . . .

I have tried — I cannot stop them!
It was all light a while ago — all clear:
Now they have put out the sky.

I should not have looked away.

THE RETURN OF JEANNE D'ARC

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING

JEANNE D'ARC

Why do the vales of Paradise
Turn very France before my eyes,
With linkèd rivers, chain on chain,
Cool Meuse and amber-sandaled Aisne,
Angelic Oise serenely fleet,
And wayward Rhône on wingèd feet?
There gleams the Loire through lace of trees,
Shod as of old with silences.
And there with Paris at its breast,
The white Seine lies along the west,
How wistful!

Nay, my serious Seine,
Will nothing make thee smile again?
Has any gargoyle peering down
From Notre Dame with hostile frown
Invaded thy still dreams at night?
Dost thou lament the lost delight

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING

Of years long gone?

I wonder why

Proud Paris veils her from the sky

In twilight vesture like a nun?

I wonder, what has heaven done?

The lights are dead, the land is grey,

Like ghosts the pale roads drift away

Into the North! Oh, I would see

What years have wrought in Domremy,

And how great Rheims above the town

Lifts praying hands! I must go down

Among my people, I must know

What makes my heart remember so,

And why the voices cry so near,

The human voices that I hear!

THE MEN OF FRANCE

Now Mary lend thee out of heaven

For dear defence of rivers seven,

THE RETURN OF JEANNE D'ARC

And shattered gateways of the North!

Angel of France, oh, lead us forth!

JEANNE D'ARC

They are invaded! They have need
Of my heart's faith! Yea, I will lead,
But can they follow when I go
Unseen and vague as winds that blow?
Yet shepherd winds control the day,
To make the poplars lean one way,
To ruffle rivers into gold,
Herd home the clouds into far fold,
And tirelessly evoke the shy
Wild iris latent in the sky!
Can my wing'd spirit so persuade
Their hearts to follow unafraid?

THE MEN OF FRANCE

Now Michael gird thee with his sword,

To thrust aside the alien horde,

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING

To bend and break and hurl them forth!

Come thou and lead us to the North!

JEANNE D'ARC

Soldiers, my great grey horse long gone

To graze the meadows of the dawn,

Has thriven on clear asphodel,

Till you shall learn, he travels well,

And victory is still his stride.

You see me not, but oh, I ride

For France, and mark her starry goal,

The faith and freedom of the soul!

Do you but follow and give ear

To heavenly voices that I hear,

Till past the black besieging din

And whistling menace shrill and thin,

Emerge some silvery interval

Of vanished bells that call and call.

Forsaken save of sun and stars,

With portals blurred by brutal scars,

THE RETURN OF JEANNE D'ARC

With towers torn and windows gone,
'Tis mighty Rheims that cries you on!
Though heaven and earth be withering,
Her ruined bells shall sob and sing:
Though earth and heaven be blank and bare,
You shall behold her standing there
With wounded arms uplifted high
For men of France who fight and die!

THE MEN OF FRANCE

*Now Heaven help thee understand
The peril come upon our land!
Now God forgive our little worth
And grant thee memory of earth!*

JEANNE D'ARC

I do remember everything
I had forgotten: how the king
For all my pleading, still delayed,
But God's own angels gave me aid.

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING

There was a Chinon nightingale
That sang all night, " You will not fail! "
And there were always saintly trees
And dim old flowery villages,
And rain-pricked pools like fretted shields,
And sunny hills, and mellow fields,
Oh, there was France! So now she lies
Appealing-sweet before my eyes,
Her wide flush rivers for delight
Her spires and poplars to invite
The eyes and thoughts toward Heaven!

Men,
I fight beside you once again,
As those brief centuries ago,
Each man of you a man I know!
In Paradise I have not seen
Faces more steadfast and serene.
Let them not tear the temple down
That holds the soul of Rouen town,

THE RETURN OF JEANNE D'ARC

Nor crush the lilies Amiens wears,
Nor those fair vines along the stairs
Of Chartres, where some hand unknown
Lured leaf and fruit from silver stone.
This sunward hour of deepening dawn
Brings glory of your comrades gone,
And Rheims' lost bells are ringing!

THE MEN OF FRANCE

Hark!

It is her voice! Jeanne d'Arc! Jeanne d'Arc!

DUO

OLIVE TILFORD DARGAN

Woman in the garden
Where the angels came;
Nothing yet of pardon,
Nothing yet of shame;
Seraphs in her honour
To the gates repair,—
O, the sun upon her!
O, the golden air!

*Woman in the green ways,—
Young roots are sweet;
In and out the glean-ways,
Brown nuts at feet;
Planting, weaving, hoarding,
Saving from the wild,
Not for self or lording,
But for us — the child.*

DUO

Woman in the tower;
Moat and wall to guard,
The rare, white lady-flower
Blooming for her lord,
Whose bright sword has won her
From all knights that ride;
His to serve and honour,—
An unfading bride!

*Woman 'neath the master
Of the feudal day;
For the bread he cast her
Paying life away
To him, the mighty giver,
Him, her soul and god!
A sword for who would save her,
And for her the rod!*

Now by fireside singing!

Here at last is home;



OLIVE TILFORD DARGAN

Over ages winging
Again the angels come.
Holy love and human
In her worship rise.
O, the light on woman
Shed from children's eyes!

*To the factories feeding
Hands and soul and will;
Herded, and unheeding
She is woman still.
Trembling home in gloom light,
Home — O mock of breath!
In her eyes the loom-blight,
In her shadow, death!*

Sons must pass to battle;
Armour them with prayers;
Never conflict's rattle
Reach thy straining ears;

DUO

In the home they've made thee,
Mother, sit thee down;
With their love they'll shade thee,
With their fortune crown!

Be it or here or yonder,
Where'er thy children cry,
Far as thy fairest wander,
Far as thy dearest die,—
Be thine the heart that fareth
Past every dim frontier,
Till who the last rood dareth
Shall find a mother there!

FATHERLAND

OLIVE TILFORD DARGAN

Come fingered as a friend, O Death!

Unfrock me, flesh and bone;

These frills of smile and moan,

These laces, traces, all unpin;

These veins that net me in,

This ever lassoing breath,

Remove from me,

If here is aught to free!

To know these hills nor wait for feet!

O Earth, to be thy child at last!

Thy roads all mine, and no white gate

Inevitably fast!

To enter where thy banquets are

When storms are called to feast;

And find thy hidden pantry stair

When Spring with thee would guest;

FATHERLAND

Into thine attic windows step
From humbled Himalays,
And round thy starry cornice creep
Waylaying deities;

Though for my hand
Space hold out spheres like roses, and
Like country lanes her orbits blow —
My Earth, I know,
If thou be green and blossom still,
That I must downward go;
Leave stars to keep
House as they will;
The winds to walk or turn and sleep,
Seas to spare or kill;
Behind my back shall sunsets burn
Bereft of my concern;
Each wonder passed
Shall feed my haste,

OLIVE TILFORD DARGAN

Till I have paused, as now,
Beneath a bending orchard bough,—
An April apple-bough,
Where southern waters creep.

PRAYER BEFORE SUMMER

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

Once more across the frozen hills
Comes the premonitory breath
Of violets and of daffodils
Returning from their masque of death;

And barren branches faintly shake
To the vibrations of the sun;
In the blue sky swift wings awake:
The dance of April is begun.

Again the evening woods will be
Aisles for our trysting feet; again
The summer light on land and sea
Will make the paths of wonder plain.

Belovèd — since the indifferent Powers
That shaped our fibres deign to will
That one more summer-flush be ours,
Ours the bright wave, the flowering hill —

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

Cannot some wisdom from the past
Make gay and gentle in its mood
This April passage, through the vast
Confusions, toward our quietude? —

And sense of briefness come to lay
Its spell, as might the dreaming moon,
On the poor actors in this play
That ends so starkly and so soon?

NEAR YARMOUTH

(To Edward J. O'Brien)

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

The river holds no more the fishing boats,
For long ago the last one rotted away:
And down its ever-meandering curves of blue,
No masts jut out, eager to fight the spray.

But on dim winter nights,
When two by two the lights
Burn out among the sleepy villages
Which line its banks;
The clouds roll over, heavy ranks, from seaward,
And storm the steep waves of the sky.

These are like scudding barks with hoisted sail,
These are blue fishing smacks, setting forth for the
shoal of stars;
Lot Tubman or Amos Barker holds the wheel,
While through the sky before the wind they reel.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

And the long lines of rain
Descend upon the earth like ghostly trawl-lines:
But ere the yawning chimneys blow smoke into the
morning,
The river sleeps, the boats are gone again.

ROOMS

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

There is nothing on earth more lonely than a room;
Outdoors are stately silent places,
Filled with unchanging friendly faces,
Sharing our triumph or our doom.
But here where four flat walls share everything
With the sunlight filtering through the window-panes,
Life seems a row of black and polished grains
Listlessly slipping down an endless string.

Death paces up and down in each room we have;
Each room is a tabernacle filled with little deaths.
Pale drifting moments! Their enfeebled breaths
Only stirred once, then settled in the grave.
And over them all there broods one changeless
thought,
That we too in our time must so pass out;
As passes the light across the walls, without
Full knowledge of the goal it daily sought.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

Impulse within a room swings to-and-fro,
Shaping in letters hard and firm and clear,
What all the world that scorns and slips us here
Will never stop to read and never know: —
“ Seek God not in the forest but the cell; ”
This is the lesson that our rooms can say.
And though your tomb be open every day,
There may be resurrection-dawns to tell.

Who learns to think in rooms will conquer thought;
Who looks at walls will learn of patience' self;
Who keeps a few books, oft-read, on a shelf
Will enter in a kingdom safe, unbought.
Who warms his hands at a grate's glowing breath
Will find the warmth that runs through other hands,
Who enters in a room and understands
And knows that room is life, will pass unmoved
through death.

AFTERNOON

FANNIE STEARNS GIFFORD

Some one is coming to call.

Up the red brick path between daffodils dancing
I see white ruffles that blow:
A parasol, dipping against the sun.
It is some one stout, and warm in her new white
gloves.

My old green apron is smudged with the garden-mould.

My hands are the hands of a peasant-woman. My hair
Comes tumbling down into my eyes.

I wish I could lie down flat like a child
And hide in the grass, while she rings and rings,
And sticks her card under the door with a sigh,
And puffs away down the path.
I wish — but the parasol bobs,

FANNIE STEARNS GIFFORD

And she bobs like a mandarin's lady,
Smiling and bridling and beckoning.

If I were a daffodil, in an apron of green and gold —

But there she stands on the path,
And her gloves are so new they squeak with newness
and stoutness,
And I know she will talk of the weather and stay an
hour —

If I were a daffodil —
Or a little cool blinking bug
Down in the daffodil leaves —

OVERSEAS

In memory of Alan Seeger,
killed in battle, Belloy-en-Santerre,
July 4, 1916.

ABBIE CARTER GOODLOE

Across the vexed, insuperable sea,
Afar, we call to him — alas, in vain!
No voice of passionate sweetness answers me,
No gallant hand waves back to us again.
Across relentless barriers of foam
With useless tears our longing eyes we strain,
And useless arms stretch forth to lure him home.

He will not come to us! Afar, heart high,
He fared to find fulfilment of his dreams.
Athirst for romance, beaconing destiny,
He sought what to fair youth the fairest seems.
Singing he went — song ever on his lips —
Bright Phosphor of clear poesy, whose beams
Still shine on us even in his star's eclipse.

ABBIE CARTER GOODLOE

Across the blue, the unreturning sea,
Afar, we call to him — alas, I hear
No more a voice that chants of liberty,
No song thrill out the springtime of the year!
No clarion call from desolate Champagne
Where roll red, ebbing battle-tides, or where
The trampled vineland lapses to the Aisne.

Silent the Meuse save for the cannon's roar,
The bugle's note, the skyplanes' winnowing hum;
Silent the reaches of the scarred north shore;
Silent the shell-swept trenches of the Somme;
Silent for evermore the lonely air
Of all that lyric sweetness, hushed and dumb,
Muted upon a hillside of Santerre.

Hostage of our land's honour, by red ways,
There on that bloody slope, 'neath flame-lit skies,
With the brave few he yielded his brief days
Battling for freedom's menaced liberties.

OVERSEAS

Glimpsing, no more, horizons of romance,
Nor love's bright paths, he turned stern, dying eyes
Towards the fire-rimmed, "the brave frontiers of
France."

Oh, not for him, earth's tranquil, pleasant way!
That fervent pulse which beat to life's desire,
Leapt to the call of arms without dismay.

No conscript of blind fate! Blithe heart afire
With passionate zeal, he gave his latest breath
As some enraptured martyr mounts the pyre
And happily goes singing to his death.

Spirit of flame and tears and tenderness!
Singer and soldier, debonair and gay!
Fond worshipper of earth's dear loveliness
From Orizaba's snows to far Calais!
Pilgrim of dreams! Knight-errant without fears!
Alas, Death vanquished, should have turned away
And spared thee to Life's utmost days and years.

ALFRED KREYMBORG

you might be something dropped from the sky,

not a god-child —

I wouldn't have you that —

nor a cloud —

though I love clouds.

You're something not a bird,

I can tell.

If I could find you somewhere

outside

of me, I might tell —

but inside?

PRELUDES

ALFRED KREYMBORG

If you stand where I stand—
in my boudoir—
(don't mind my shaving—
I can't afford a barber)—
you can see into her boudoir—
you can see milady—
her back, her green smock, the bench she loves—
her hair always down in the morning—
(the sun conspiring with the curtains?)—
reddish brown,
with ringlets at the tips—
the hairdresser called this A. M.—
him I have to, I want to afford.
Unhappily, you can't see her face—
only the back of her small round head—
and a glint of her ears, two glints—
but her hands, alas, not her hands, though
happily, you can hear them.

ALFRED KREYMBORG

It isn't a clavichord —
only a satinwood square —
bought cheap at an auction —
but it might be, you'd think it,
a clavichord, bequeathed by the past —
it sounds quite like feathers.

Bach? Yes, who else could that be —
whom else would you have in the morning —
with the sun and milady?

Grave? Yes, but so is the sun —
not always? No, but please don't ponder —
listen, hear the theme —
hear it dig into the earth of harmonies.

A dissonance? No, 'twas only a stone —
which powders into particles with the rest.

Now follow the theme —
down, down, into the soil —
calling, evoking the spirit of birth —
you hear those new tones —

PRELUDES

that sprinkle, that burst —
roulade and arpeggio?
Gently now, firmly —
with solemn persuasion —
hiding a whimsic raillery —
(does a dead king raise his forefinger?)—
though they would, though they might —
no phrase can escape —
the theme, the theme rules.
Unhappy? Nay, nay —
they ought to be happy —
each is because of, in spite of, the other —
that is democracy.
He can't spare a particle —
that priest of the morning sun —
A mistake? Yes indeed, but —
all the more human —
would you have her drum like a schoolmaster —
abominable right note at the right time —

ALFRED KREYMBORG

in the morning, so early —
or ever at all?
She'll play it again —
oh don't, please don't clap —
you'll disturb them!
Here, try my tobacco —
good, a deep pipeful, eh? —
an aromatic blend —
my other extravagance —
yes, I'll join you, but wait —
I must first dry my face!

OUR GUARDIAN ANGELS AND THEIR CHILDREN

VACHEL LINDSAY

Where a river roars in rapids
And doves in maples fret,
Where peace has decked the pastures
Our guardian angels met.

Long they had sought each other
In God's mysterious name,
Had climbed the solemn chaos tides
Alone, with hope aflame:

Amid the demon deeps had wound
By many a fearful way.
As they beheld each other
Their shout made glad the day.

No need of purse delayed them,
No hand of friend or kin —

VACHEL LINDSAY

Nor menace of the bell and book,

Nor fear of mortal sin.

You did not speak, my girl,

At this, our parting hour.

Long we held each other

And watched their deeds of power.

They made a curious Eden.

We saw that it was good.

We thought with them in unison.

We proudly understood

Their amaranth eternal,

Their roses strange and fair,

The asphodels they scattered

Upon the living air.

They built a house of clouds

With skilled, immortal hands.

OUR GUARDIAN ANGELS

They entered through the silver doors.

Their wings were wedded brands.

I laboured up the valley

To granite mountains free.

You hurried down the river

To Zidon by the sea.

But at their place of meeting

They keep a home and shrine.

Your angel twists a purple flax,

Then weaves a mantle fine.

My angel, her defender

Upstanding, spreads the light

On painted clouds of fancy

And mists that wrap the height.

Their sturdy babes speak kindly

And fly and run with joy,

VACHEL LINDSAY

Shepherding the helpless lambs —

A Grecian girl and boy.

These children visit Heaven

Each year and justify

The time we cried and parted,

And every dream and sigh.

From books our God has written

They sing of high desire.

They turn the leaves in gentleness.

Their wings are folded fire.

THE RING AND THE CASTLE

A Ballad

AMY LOWELL

“ Benjamin Bailey, Benjamin Bailey, why do you wake
at the stroke of three? ”

“ I heard the hoot of an owl in the forest, and the
creak of the wind in the alder-tree.”

“ Benjamin Bailey, Benjamin Bailey, why do you stare
so into the dark? ”

“ I saw white circles twining, floating, and in the
centre a molten spark.”

“ Why are you restless, Benjamin Bailey? Why do
you fling your arms so wide? ”

“ To keep the bat’s wings from coming closer and
push the grey rat from my side.”

“ What are you muttering, Benjamin Bailey? The
room is quiet, the moon is clear.”

AMY LOWELL

“The trees of the forest are curling, swaying, writhing
over the heart of my Dear.”

“Lie down and cover you, Benjamin Bailey, you’re
raving, for never a wife or child
Has blessed your hearthstone; it is the fever, which
startles your brain with dreams so wild.”

“No wife indeed,” said Benjamin Bailey, and his blue
nails picked at the bedquilt’s edge.

“I gathered a rose in another man’s garden and hid it
from sight in a hawthorn hedge.

“I made her a chamber where green boughs rustled,
and plaited river-grass for the floor,
And three times ten moonlight nights I loved her,
with my old hound stretching before the door.

“Then out of the North a knight came riding, with
crested helm and pointed sword.

THE RING AND THE CASTLE

‘Where is my wife,’ said the knight to the people.

‘My wife! My wife! ’ was his only word.

“He tied his horse to the alder yonder, and stooped
his crest to enter my door.

‘My wife,’ said the knight, and a steel-grey glitter
flashed from his armour across the floor.

“Then I lied to that white-faced knight, and told him
the lady had never been seen by me;
And when he had loosed his horse from the alder, I
bore him a mile of company.

“I turned him over the bridge to the valley, and waved
him Godspeed in the twilight grey.
And I laughed all night as I toyed with his lady,
clipping and kissing the hours away.

“The sun was kind and the wind was gentle, and the
green boughs over our chamber sang,

AMY LOWELL

But on the Eastern breeze came a tinkle whenever the
bells in the Abbey rang.

“Dang! went the bell and the lady hearkened, once,
twice, thrice, and her tears sprang forth.

‘ ‘Twas three of the clock when I was wedded,’ quoth
she, ‘in the castle to the North.’

“ ‘They praised us for a comely couple, in truth my
Lord was a sight to see,

I gave him my troth for a golden dowry, and he gave
me this ring on the stroke of three.

“ ‘Three years I lived with him fair and stately, and
then we quarrelled, as lovers will.

He swore I wed for his golden dowry, and I that he
loved another still.

“ ‘I knew right well that never another had crossed the
heart of my Dearest Lord,

THE RING AND THE CASTLE

But still my rage waxed hot within me until, one morning, I fled abroad.

“ ‘ All down the flickering isles of the forest I rode till at twilight I sat me down,
And there a-weeping you found and took me, as one lifts a leaf which the wind has blown.

“ ‘ But to-night my ring burns hot on my finger, and my Lord’s face shines through the curtained door.
And the bells beat heavy against my temples, two long strokes, and one stroke more:

“ ‘ Loose me now, for your touch is terror, my heart is a hollow, my arms are wind;
I must go out once more and wander, seeking the forest for what I shall find.’

“ Then I fell upon her and stifled her speaking till the bells died away in the rustling breeze,

AMY LOWELL

And so I held her dumb until morning with smoothed lips, but I knew no ease.

“ And every night that the bells came clearly, striking three strokes, like a heavy stone,
I would seal her lips, but even as I kissed her, behind her clenched teeth I could hear her moan.

“ The nights grew longer, I had the lady, her pale blue veins and her skin of milk,
But I might have been clasping a white wax image straightly stretched on a quilt of silk.

“ Then curdled anger foamed within me, and I tore at her finger to take the ring,
The red gold ring which burned her spirit like some bewitched, unhallowed thing.

“ High in the boughs of our leafy chamber, the lady’s sorrowing died away.

THE RING AND THE CASTLE

All night I fought for the red gold circle, all night,
till the oak trees reddened to day.

“ For two nights more I strove to take it, the red gold
circlet, the ring of fear,
But on the third in a blood-red vision I drew my
sword and cut it clear.

“ Severed the ring and severed the finger, and slew my
Dear on the stroke of three;
Then I dug a grave beneath the oak trees, and buried
her there where none could see.

“ I took the ring, and the bleeding finger, and sent a
messenger swiftly forth,
An amazing gift to my Lord I sent them, in his
lonely castle to the North.

“ He died, they say, at the sight of my present, I
laughed when I heard it — ‘ Hee! Hee! Hee! ’

AMY LOWELL

But every night my veins run water and my pores
sweat blood at the stroke of three."

" Benjamin Bailey, Benjamin Bailey, seek repentance,
your time is past."

" My Dearest Dear lies under the oak-trees, pity indeed
that the ring held fast."

" Benjamin Bailey, Benjamin Bailey, sinners repent
when they come to die."

" Toll the bell in the Abbey tower, and under the oak-
trees let me lie."

SHORE GRASS

AMY LOWELL

The moon is cold over the sand-dunes,
And the clumps of sea-grasses flow and glitter;
The thin chime of my watch tells the quarter after
midnight;
And still I hear nothing
But the windy beating of the sea.

SMELLS

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Why is it that the poets tell
So little of the sense of smell?
These are the odours I love well:

The smell of coffee freshly ground;
Or rich plum pudding, holly crowned;
Or onions fried and deeply browned.

The fragrance of a fumy pipe;
The smell of apples, newly ripe;
And printers' ink on leaden type.

Woods by moonlight in September
Breathe most sweet; and I remember
Many a smoky camp-fire ember.

Camphor, turpentine, and tea,
The balsam of a Christmas tree,
These are whiffs of gramarye. . . .
A ship smells best of all to me!

AN APRIL SEQUENCE

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

I

Premonition

Where does the wind from the wilding blow
Troubling the dream-caught woods of dawn
With hushed remembrance of woven music
Out of the shadowy gates of horn?

Under the still-fringed water-meadows
Colour is veining the grassy ways.
Over the dove-clad clouds of winter
A lark's cry falls through the ringing haze.

Wind and water and star-paled heaven
Mingle in colour and whisper of wind.
Earth and air call unto the Father.
Can April wonder be far behind?

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

II

Tiding

When all the tides of April

Are rising in the air,

And flowing grass and cloud

And sea are fair,

Light circles in the flower

And flesh and foam,

And body unto body

Now turns home,

While He whom, clad in colour

And dream and prayer,

Light heralds, rises naked,

And white, and fair.

III

That skylark curving toward the south

And circling idly up the wind,

AN APRIL SEQUENCE

Unmindful of the winter's way,

Leaves melody behind.

Proclaiming through his arch of gold

From heaven high to earth's deep,

The wind that blows the stars to flame

Cradles flowers in their sleep.

IV

April Flame

Wind of the foaming air,

Ripple over my heart,

With April flame bend low,

Of mine a part.

Flower of the western sky,

Blow in my flesh,

With April laughter mine,

Caught in my mesh.

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

Stars of the budding night,
Shine on my brow:
Make of these smouldering fires
White wisdom now!

v

Why grieve to see the light in air,
Or sigh, of April fain?
White orchards all afoam with stars
Shall flower the dreaming plain.

For spring comes white with morning,
And laughs the clouds away.
Why grieve that April flame is fled?
Arise, and shout with May!

IN LATE SPRING

CHARLES L. O'DONNELL

I mark me how to-day the maples wear
A look of inward burgeoning and I feel
Colours I see not in the naked air,
Lance-keen, and with the little blue of steel.

No bud is forth nor green abroad and yet
Air seems to wait with raiment for earth's
flowers;
Come, then, ungarmented, thou violet,
And take thy purple of the tiring hours.

EXILES

VINCENT O'SULLIVAN

The sick crusader watches
Through the window the fall of snow;
She stands under the palm-trees watching
The slow black caravans go.

She sees him by the window watching
The vacant snow-flakes fall;
He sees her in the hot sun standing
Sorrowful, white, and tall.

She hears him through the snow telling her
All in his heart to tell —
Beneath the moveless palm-trees
In the dead glare at the well.

FAR UP IN THE MYSTERY HILLS

VINCENT O'SULLIVAN

Far up in the Mystery Hills
Lies hid the little stone,
And I must climb the Mystery Hills
On the grey day, alone.

Under the aching sky at noon
Blows a vast wind and cries
Dead hours and their solemnities:
Ah, they were still and wise.

And is it this, the little stone?
Oh, my poor brother, see
The broken things, the broken things,
That will not let me be.

HE SINGS BECAUSE HIS WIFE HAS GONE
OUT OF THE HOUSE

VINCENT O'SULLIVAN

He sings because his wife has gone out of the house:
Bending over the table in the twilight of the room
He sings soft old things he sang when he was a boy,
And near his chair stays listening a grey mouse.

He sings because the gay loud woman is out in the town,
And in his heart there is a quiet, and the room is so still
That the grey mouse preens its whiskers far away from the wall,
For the man's voice is dreamy and kind like those who are very ill.

And he wonders if some day his wife will go out of the house
And leave him alone with the mouse, too still to feel more

HE SINGS

Than the waves and the waves of quiet in the dark-
ened room,
As he lies with the sun on his face through a chink of
the door.

RAINY DAY

VINCENT O'SULLIVAN

The patient rain falls in a hush
On the poor little town;
All night long it fell on the street
Where the leaves lie dead and brown.

The drug-store shines with wet,
And behind the glass panes stare
The pale eyes of the palsied woman
Who lives by her kind son's care.

Nobody goes out at all;
But the little ships at sea
Sail wisely through the mist of rain
And this night they will be

Rocking at the wharves
Of the poor little town,
And the strong captains shouting Ho! Ho!
After the sails come down.

DEFEAT

WILLIAM ALEXANDER PERCY

Though you have struck me to the bloody core,
It is indeed only one scar the more!
And I'll not turn from you as at the other strokes,
Nor say "Good-bye!" as other times I said.

The agony still chokes,
And still it seems most restful to be dead.
But I'll not say "Good-bye" nor turn away
Nor parting lover play. . . .

Leave you? Take everything save all — my heart?
I know the scene too well, too well my part!
Hot tears and bitterness; and I would go,
Go for an hour, a day, a week —
Is bitterness so short called pique?
And in the old, old way without regret
I would return to you;
And in the old, old way you would forget
That ever I had gone, and let
Some casual tenderness

WILLIAM ALEXANDER PERCY

Be my return's caress;
Or, in some vague, absorbed distress,
Lift up your shadow eyes to mine, still wet.

TO BUTTERFLY

WILLIAM ALEXANDER PERCY

Do you remember how the twilight stood
And leaned above the river just to see
If still the crocus buds were in her hood,
And if her robes were gold or shadowy?
Do you remember how the twilight stood
When we were lovers and the world our wood?
And then, one night, when we could find no word,
But silence trembled like a heart — like mine! —
And suddenly that moon-enraptured bird
Awoke and all the darkness turned to wine?
How long ago that was! And how absurd
For us to own a wood that owned a bird!

They tell me there are magic gardens still,
And birds that sleep to wake and dream to sing,
And streams that pause for crocus skies to fill;
But they that told were lovers and 'twas spring.
Yet why the moon to-night's a daffodil
When it is March—Do you remember, still?

CHLOE TO AMARYLLIS

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE

That you are poor, that I grow old,
It matters not. Our battles hold.
The lovely, undisturbèd things
Are left for our rememberings.

Kings' houses; graves out on the downs;
Shop windows in great ancient towns;
The rooks tossed up the rosy sky
Out of the vicarage garden high;
The minster tower poignant with years
That shook the dusk as though with tears.

Scraps of old music dewy-clear
Haunt us each turning of the year;
When fields are coloured like a stone,
A thought of April can atone;
Of cowslip flowers golden small
Under a windy village wall.

CHLOE TO AMARYLLIS

That you are poor, and I grow old!
But memories keep; but battles hold: —
The footspace snatched from quaking mire;
From dying dreams the undying fire;
And when we trod the perilous land,
The god all ready to our hand.

GENEVIEVE AND ALEXANDRA

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

GENEVIEVE

Don't look at me so much as if to-day
Were the last day on earth for both of us!

ALEXANDRA

Now for the love of heaven, dear Genevieve,
And for your love of me, and I'm your sister,
Say why it is that since I found this house
That all-mysterious little tongue of yours,
Which God gave you to talk with and so tell
Bewildered sisters and impatient friends
Whatever 'tis that ails you, tells me nothing.
You sent for me as if the world were dying
All round you, quite as mice do that are poisoned,
And here I am; and I'll be dying soon,
Of common ordinary desperation,
Unless you tell me more now in an hour
Than you have had me guessing in a fortnight.

GENEVIEVE AND ALEXANDRA

GENEVIEVE

Dear child, have you no eyes?

ALEXANDRA

Two, Genevieve;

But they were never sharp enough to find
A way to make the man who married you
See more in me than in six hundred others.
I would have given half my fingers then
To make him look at me as if he saw me;
But it was you he saw, and you seemed frightened.
I wish the creature might have cared enough
To frighten me! But I was just a thing
With skirts and arms and legs and ears and hair,
Like all of us he saw — till he saw you.
You know it, and I say it. That's all over.

GENEVIEVE

My God, there's no beginning to some things,
Or I could speak. For two weeks I have waited

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

For you to make it easy to be hard;
And yet you tell me now that you have eyes!
Did you have eyes last night?

ALEXANDRA

I thought so.

GENEVIEVE

Yes?

ALEXANDRA

You are coming then to something after all;
And that's a boon. But all you say, my dear,
Is not quite all you mean. You don't mean Her?

GENEVIEVE

I counted on you to find words where I
Find silence. Was that too ridiculous?

ALEXANDRA

You counted on my old unpleasant way
Of saying out what you find odious?
I understand, and I'll be generous.

GENEVIEVE AND ALEXANDRA

I'm old enough, the good Lord knows, who gave me
A feature less than what I might have used
Of beauty, and you more than you can use;
Or so it seems. The good Lord's ways are past
Our delving, and we've each a book to read —
A book that has a leaf we'll not lay open
Till Time's old skinny finger does it for us.
It's all a game, and one Time plays with women
Who cannot meet the Lord half way. That's you,
My angel. There'll be something done about it;
Or there'll be waiting till Time wins again,
And then 'twill all be groaning, and too late.

For Time has had an eye on even you,
These years together. Don't forget old sayings,
or they are true and they have not much mercy.

GENEVIEVE

And what are you saying of old sayings?
It's not what I want now, but the new.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

I've had enough that's old. I've had enough —
Day after day of it. Do I look old?

ALEXANDRA

Not yet; you needn't fret. But even at that
There's time enough to tear the calendar
When days are dead.

GENEVIEVE

She's older than I am.

ALEXANDRA

She knows, my dear.

GENEVIEVE

She knows it, and he knows it!

ALEXANDRA

But that's not all she knows, nor all he knows.

GENEVIEVE

What are you saying now? What do you mean?

GENEVIEVE AND ALEXANDRA

ALEXANDRA

I'm saying something new. Lord save us all;
I'm saying something new. You cried aloud
For me to do it, and you only ask,
"What are you saying now!" I'm saying this:
I'm saying there are men to take your gift
Of pride and ice and fear of being human,
And, having it, be happy all their days;
I'm saying also that the man you married
Is not a cave-man, or a cannibal
Who means to eat you pretty soon,— although
An alabaster shrine with now and then
A taper burning low, or going out,
Is not what he calls home or good religion.
He calls it something else, and something worse.
I'm sorry, but he does.

GENEVIEVE

And you defend him.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

ALEXANDRA

Defence and understanding, as I know them,
Are not of a necessity the same.

GENEVIEVE

How do you know so much?

ALEXANDRA

I don't know much;
I know a little. I wish you knew a little.

GENEVIEVE

I wish you knew a little more.

ALEXANDRA

You're crying!

GENEVIEVE

Well, if I am, what of it? I am not
The only woman who has ever cried.
I'm not the only woman, I dare say,

GENEVIEVE AND ALEXANDRA

Who's in a cage, beating on iron bars
That even other women cannot see.

ALEXANDRA

Surely I see them — with a difference.

GENEVIEVE

How good of you to see them!

ALEXANDRA

Say no more,

My dear, until you are yourself again.
You tell of cages and of iron bars,
And there are bars, I grant you: bars enough,
But they are not of iron. Do you think
Because a man — a rather furry man
Who likes a woman with a dash of Eve
To liven her insensible perfection —
Looks now and then the other way, that you
Are cribbed in iron for the blessed length
Of all your silly days? Why don't you like

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

To see, with your magnificent sad eyes,
How much, and yet how little, you may do
To send that other one to Jericho,
Or some place else? I wish I had your face!
If so, you might be free now, as I am;
Free as a bird, and one without a cage.
O Lord, so free, so free! Some day or other,
When I'm at home, I'm going to throw a brick
At that superb tall monstrous Ching-Chang vase
In the front room which every one admires.
There'll be a noise, and that will make a change,
If nothing else. You made a change; and all
You get of it's a reason to be jealous.
Lord love us, you'll be jealous next of me,
Because your condescending spouse made out
Somehow to scratch my cheek with his hard whiskers,
To honour my arrival. He might as well
Have done it with a broom, and I've a guess
Would rather.

GENEVIEVE AND ALEXANDRA

GENEVIEVE

I can only say again,
I wish you knew a little more.

ALEXANDRA

I wish
You fancied not so much.

GENEVIEVE

Oh, is it fancy?

ALEXANDRA

Whatever it is, you've made it what it is.
I know the man; he wants his house to live in.
He's not the kind who makes another man's
Romance a nightmare for the humour of it;
He's not one to go leering everywhere
As if he were a spider with an income;
He's what he is; and you that have him so,
I see, are in the best of ways to lose him.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

But who am I, to talk of him? You made me,
And you'll remember that. Now that's all over.

GENEVIEVE

You pat me as you would a little dog.

ALEXANDRA

Bow-wow!

GENEVIEVE

I wish you knew a little more.

ALEXANDRA

My darling, you have honoured me three times
By wishing that identical sweet wish;
And if in all agreement with your text
I say as much myself and say it louder,
You'll treasure to my credit, when I'm dead,
One faint remembrance of humility.
Although I don't think you are listening,
I'm saying I'm an insect. Do you hear me?
Lord, what a sigh!

GENEVIEVE AND ALEXANDRA

GENEVIEVE

I hear you. Yes, I hear you.

And what you seem to say so easily
May be the end of wisdom, possibly.
And I may change. I don't believe it much,
But I may change a little. I don't know.
It may be now that I don't care enough
To change. It may be that the few lights left
Around the shrine, as you say, may go out
Without my tending them or seeing them.
It seems a jealous love is not enough
To bring at once to light, as I have seen it,
The farthest hidden of all mockeries
That home can hold and hide — until it comes.
Well, it has come. Oh, never mind me now!
Our tears are cheap, and men see few of them.
He doesn't know that I know.

ALEXANDRA

Genevieve!

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Say something, if you only say you hate me.
What have I done? Have I done anything?
It isn't what I said? I knew it wasn't.
Poor child, I cannot ask if you are right,
Or say that you are wrong, until I know
The growing of all this. Whatever word
You tell me now, although you find it hard—
And life has nothing harder than small words
That may not say themselves and be forgotten—
May prove at last, or soon, or even to-day,
The one beginning of deliverance.
No more then. I'll not sting you for an answer.
Indeed, I may be wrong; and it may be
That you are not my sister any more.

GENEVIEVE

The farthest hidden things are still, my dear.
They make no noise; and we, in our poor turn,
Say less of them than of the common spite
We nourish for the friend who loves too much.

GENEVIEVE AND ALEXANDRA

They come from where they live, like slender snakes,
And strike us in the dark; and then we suffer.
And you, my sister, of all women living,
Have made me know the truth of what I'm saying;
And you, as I'm a fool, know nothing more
Than what I've hardly said. Thank God for that.

ALEXANDRA

Why mock yourself with more unhappy names
Than sorrow shares with reason? Why defeat
The one safe impulse and the one sure need
That now are on their way to lay for ever
The last of all the bogeys you have seen
Somewhere in awful corners that are dark
Because you make them so and keep them so?
You like the dark, maybe. I don't. I hate it.
Now tell me what it is you've hardly said;
For I assure you that you've hardly said it.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

GENEVIEVE

You make a jest of love and all it means.
I can bear that. The world has always done it,
The world has always borne it. Many men
And women have made laughter out of those
Who might as well have been in hell as here,
Alive and listening. When love can hold
Its own with change, no more, 'twere better then
For love to die. Indeed, there might be then,
If that were all, an easy death for love;
If not, then for the woman.

ALEXANDRA

If that were all?

You speak now as if that were not enough.

GENEVIEVE

It seems it isn't. There's another corner;
And in that corner there's another ghost.

GENEVIEVE AND ALEXANDRA

ALEXANDRA

What have I done? Have I done anything?

GENEVIEVE

**Yes, you have made me see how poor I am;
How futile, and how far away I am
From what his hungry love and hungry mind
Thought I was giving when I gave myself.**

ALEXANDRA

**But when his eyes are on you, I can swear
That I see only kindness in his face.**

GENEVIEVE

I'll send you home if you say that again.

ALEXANDRA

**Be tranquil; I shall not say that again.
But tell me more about his hungry mind —
I understand the rest of it. Good Lord!
I never knew he had a hungry mind.**

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

GENEVIEVE

He hasn't one when you are with him.

ALEXANDRA

What!

GENEVIEVE

I say he hasn't one when you are with him.

**You feed him. You can talk of what he knows
And cares about. Six months have been enough
To make what little mind I ever had
A weariness too blank for his endurance.
He knows how little I shall ever know,—
He knows that in his measure I'm a fool;
And there is only — kindness in his face,
You tell me now. I'd rather be his dog.**

ALEXANDRA

**What in the name of ruin, dear Genevieve,
Do you think you are doing now with words?**

GENEVIEVE AND ALEXANDRA

GENEVIEVE

I'd rather be a byword in the city,
And let him have his harem and be happy;
I'd rather live in hovels and eat scraps,
And feed the pigs and all the wretched babies;
I'd rather steal my food or starve to death;
I'd rather cut my feet off and take poison;
I'd rather sit and skin myself alive
Than be a fool! I'd rather be a toad
Than live to see that — kindness in his face!

ALEXANDRA

Poor Genevieve, that wasn't you! Your nerves
Are talking, and they don't know what they're saying.
Don't think that you alone of womankind
Have had these little fancies.

GENEVIEVE

Oh, stop that!

DRUMNOTES

CARL SANDBURG

Days of the dead men, Danny.

Drum for the dead, drum on your
remembering heart.

Jaurès, a great love-heart of France,
a slug of lead in the red valves.

Kitchener of Khartoum, tall, cold, proud,
a shark's mouthful.

Franz Josef, the old man of forty haunted
kingdoms, in a tomb with the Hapsburg
fathers, moths eating a green uniform
to tatters, worms taking all and leaving
only bones and gold buttons, bones and
iron crosses.

Jack London, Jim Riley, Verhaeren, riders to
the republic of dreams.

Days of the dead, Danny.

Drum on your remembering heart.

AN OLD INN BY THE SEA¹

ODELL SHEPARD

All night long we had heard the voice of the Sea
Roaming the corridors.
Across the worn and hollow floors
There went a ghostly tread incessantly.
The walls of our old inn,
By windy winters eaten grey and thin,
Trembled and shook, the wild night long,
With resonant, vague, hoarse-throated song
Like a storm-strung violin.

All night we heard vast forces throng
To onset in the dark, indomitably strong,
An army under sable banners flying.
And then, above the din
Of far wild voices crying
And farther, wilder voices dreadfully replying,
Slowly, far down the unseen mysterious shore,

¹ Written shortly after America's declaration of war.

ODELL SHEPARD

With fearful sibilance and long unintermittent roar,
We heard another, mightier tide begin!

Then our hearts shook, there on the world's wild rim
Fronting eternity and neighbouring the Abyss.
Had we not cowered all night from the face of Him,
The King of Terrors, from the coil and hiss
Of the pale snakes of death
Wriggling about our very door?
Had we not borne his clammy breath
Upon our hair
Nightlong, and his stealthy footstep on the stair,
His vast voice everywhere?
Had not each echoing wall and hollow floor,
Worn by his winds so grey and spectre-thin,
Resounded like the shell of a fragile violin
That screams once at its death and never more?
Had He not homage of our fear enough before
He sent this last dark cohort crashing in?

THE FLOCK AT EVENING

ODELL SHEPARD

Down from the rocky western steep
Where now the sunset crumbles low
The shepherd draws his sun-drowsed sheep
Ringed in a rosy glow;
Along the dusty leaf-hung lane,
Now blurred in shade, now bright again,
They trail in splendour, aureoled
And mystical in clouded gold.

As insubstantial as a dream
They huddled homeward by my door,—
From what Theocritean stream
Or what Thessalian shore?
What ancient air surrounds them still,
As though from some Arcadian hill
They shuffled through the afterglow
Across the fields of long ago?

ODELL SHEPARD

Is this the flock that Bion kept
From straying by his reed-soft tunes
While the long ilex shadow crept
Through ancient afternoons?
In some still Arethusan wood,
Ages agone, have they not stood
Wondering, circle-wise and mute,
Round some remote Sicilian flute?

I think that they have gazed across
The dazzle of Ionian seas
From the green capes of Tenedos
Or sea-washed Cyclades,
And loitered through the twilight down
The hills that gird some Attic town
Still shining in the early gloam
Beside the murmur of the foam.

What dream is this? I know the croft,
Deep in this dale, where they were born;

A FLOCK AT EVENING

I know their wind-swept hills aloft
Among the rustling corn;
Yet, while they glimmer slowly by,
A younger earth, a fairer sky
Seem round them, and they move sublime
Among the morning dews of time.

THE FIRST FOOD

GEORGE STERLING

Mother, in some sad evening long ago,
From thy young breast my groping lips were taken,
Their hunger stilled, so soon again to waken,
But nevermore that holy food to know.

Ah! nevermore! for all the child might crave!
Ah! nevermore! through years unkind and dreary!
Often of other fare my lips are weary,
Unwearied once of what thy bosom gave.

(Poor wordless mouth that could not speak thy name!
At what unhappy revels has it eaten
The viands that no memory can sweeten,—
The banquet found eternally the same!)

Then fell a shadow first on thee and me,
And tendrils broke that held us two how dearly!
Once infinitely thine, then hourly, yearly,
Less thine, as less the worthy thine to be!

THE FIRST FOOD

(O mouth that yet should kiss the mouth of Sin!
Were lies so sweet, now bitter to remember?
Slow sinks the flame unfaithful to an ember;
New beauty fades and passion's wine is thin.)

How poor an end of that solicitude
And all the love I had not from another!
Peace to thine unforgettable heart, O Mother,
Who gav'st the dear and unremembered food!

LLEWELLYN, PRINCE OF CAMBRIA

A WELSH BALLAD

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

Llewellyn stood at his palace door,

And a frown was on his face.

“ Farewell,” he cried to his new-wed bride,

“ Farewell for a little space!

“ Sith you deny me a dole of love

For the gift of my princely name,

I’m forth to seek me a love that will,

Though it be a love of shame.”

Llewellyn he turned from his palace gate,

Went over the hills away;

He ate of the deer, he drank of the stream

For many a livelong day.

Llewellyn rose from his bed of leaves

One morn when the mists were red,

LLEWELLYN, PRINCE OF CAMBRIA

And he was aware of a woman's form
Stood high on a cliff o'erhead.

This woman was clad in the dun deer-skin,
But one white breast was bare,
And kilted was she above the knee,
And loose was her red-gold hair.

The sun rose behind her out of the east,
And she glowed like a flame of fire,
And she stretched her arms toward Llewellyn there
Till he trembled with sweet desire.

Then up leapt he right wantonly
And ran to where she stood,
But she waved her hand, and turned and fled
Through the dark of the tangled wood.

The woman ran and Llewellyn ran
Through bush and meadow and brake,

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

O'er many a craggy mountain-ridge,

Round many a quiet lake.

And twice when Llewellyn stopped to breathe

In the heat of the breathless noon

The woman turned and looked at him

Till his strong heart reeled in a swoon.

They ran all day and they ran at eve

By the light of the first wan star,

For Llewellyn followed her red-gold hair

That gleamed in the dusk afar.

They came at length to a narrow glen

Where the cliff rose sheer o'erhead.

The woman she sank in a huddled heap

And hid her face as in dread.

Llewellyn came up and looked at her

While her panting shoulders heaved,

LLEWELLYN, PRINCE OF CAMBRIA

He heard the sob of her deep-drawn breath,
And his heart was well-nigh grieved.

“ O prize that the speed of my feet hath won,
Come yield with a right good grace!
You wakened my love, you may still my love.—
Turn round and show your face! ”

She answered him, and her voice was low,
But welcome unto his ear:
“ What vow will you vow if I turn to you,
For my bosom is faint with fear.

“ If you would have me to show my face
And yield to you frank and free,
You must pass your troth you will never bed
With woman unless with me.

“ If you would master a woman’s love,
You must yield to a woman’s pride,

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

For I have a knife within my hand
That else will pierce my side."

Llewellyn raised the cross of his glaive
And a mighty vow made he:
" Be God my help as I keep this troth,
If you will but yield to me! "

The woman laughed with a bitter laugh:
" A mighty oath you make;
But you vowed as deep to your wedded wife,
And now that vow you would break."

" If I vowed as deep to my wedded wife,
'Twas my father that bade me to;
But now I have won a bride of my own,
And my vow to her is true."

She has turned her round, she has shown her face
On the greensward where she lay;

LLEWELLYN, PRINCE OF CAMBRIA

And he has kneeled him to look on her,
For the evening light was grey.

He has seen the eyes of his own sweet wife,

He has seen her red mouth smile.

He has bowed his head to the dewy grass

And cried, "Woe worth the while!

" For I am shamed that I did not know

The fairest woman alive,

But treated her ill and spoke her harsh

Because I was forced to wive."

She has drawn his body into her arms,

Has kissed him on cheek and brow;

" Sith you have won a bride of your own,

Be faithful to your vow."

" What made you refuse my love before,

If now you love me so?

And why did you stain your black, black hair

A hue that I could not know? "

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

“ Oh the love of yours I refused before
Was a love a woman would scorn,
For the love of yours I refused before
Was a love whence hate is born.

“ And I did stain my black, black hair
And put off my robes of pride
That you might strive as never you strove
Ere you won me for your bride.

“ For the love that falls like fruit from the tree
Will lightly be thrown away,
But the love that is bought with a man’s whole strength
Will haply last for aye.”

She drew his breast to her bosom then,
His lips unto hers she drew;
“ You have vowed your vow, you have won me now,
And I will yield to you.”

AT MIDNIGHT

SARA TEASDALE

Now at last I have come to see what life is,
Nothing is ever ended, everything only begun,
And the brave victories that seem so splendid
Are never really won.

Even love, that I built my spirit's house for,
Comes like a baffled and a brooding guest,
And art and fame and love and even laughter
Are not so good as rest.

THE EMBERS SPEAK

THOMAS WALSH

I was the acorn that fell
From the autumn bough
In the warm earth to dwell;
I grew to a branch somehow;
And I waved in the nightly storm,
And sheltered the kine
When the hills were yellow and warm
With the noon divine.

I, too, 'mid the sheathing moss
Felt the ax's blow,
And fell, with a thunderous loss
Of the stars I know
And the clouds that sift no more
Through my shattered limbs;
Save where the hearthstones roar
And the dying ember dims.

LAGGARD

MARGARET WIDDEMER

My mind is very swift and gay;
She flutters to and fro,
She knows a thousand things to play,
A thousand roads to go;

But oh, my heart will never play—
She sits and watches still
A stone she saw them set one day
Beside a low green hill.



